

PRESS RELEASE  
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From the office of Senator Olin D. Johnston (Dem., S. C.),  
Chairman of the Senate Post Office & Civil Service Committee

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Senator Olin D. Johnston of South Carolina, Chairman of the Senate Post Office and Civil Service Committee made the following statement today at the opening of the hearings on pay for Federal employees:

"The full Committee is in session here this morning to begin public hearings on S. 3141, the bill which I introduced to make permanent the 2-1/2 per cent temporary pay increase voted the Nation's postal employees over two years ago.

"The Committee also desires to receive advice and pertinent information on whether additional adjustments in the salaries of the postal and Classification Act employees are justified and if so -- to what extent -- and in what areas.

"This is a marked departure from the procedure of the Committee in the past. Many suggestions have been made to me, as Chairman of the Committee, and to others on the Committee that we introduce bills providing pay increases of as much as 25 per cent. I have declined to do this -- and I notice other Members have also declined. This has been done to allow a full and free discussion of the matter rather than concentrating testimony on a single proposal.

"It is my intention to restrict testimony to the problems at hand ---

"1. Is the compensation being paid to the postal and classified employees commensurate with salaries paid in private industry -- yes, and even to certain employees in the Government.

"2. Are the present salary levels high enough to permit the Government to recruit and retain the people with the background and experience necessary to maintain this as the greatest Government in the history of mankind?

"3. Are the present salary levels high enough to permit the same standard of living enjoyed by these same employees in 1939?

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"4. If the answer to either of these questions is No -- then it is our purpose to determine how much of an increase is necessary to bring the salary level up to these standards and how and where should these increases apply.

"In order to help the Committee arrive at the answers to these vital questions -- I had hoped to start the hearings this morning with the Secretary of Labor, Mr. Mitchell.

"Unfortunately, the Secretary declined the invitation of the Committee to appear here and explain the details of the recent contract in the steel industry.

"The Secretary is needed here to tell of the influence of the Vice President and himself in the steel strike settlement.

"The Secretary is needed here to tell us how much the settlement means to the rank and file steel worker -- both in direct benefits and in fringe benefits.

"I am happy for these people and believe they deserve every benefit they finally derived from the steel settlement. However, I do not believe they are any more deserving than the Nation's Federal workers. If high officials in the administration think otherwise, I think we should know why.

"If the cost-of-living has increased for the steel workers --- it has increased for the Federal workers.

"If the fringe benefits should be improved for the steelworker --- maybe they should also be improved for the Federal worker.

"Again, I want to caution the witnesses - - - this hearing is not being held on any bill already introduced -- in the past it has been the practice for witnesses to direct their testimony to inequities in proposals before the Committee.

"I have heard many times during my tenure as Chairman of this Committee -- that the administration does not favor or wish to consider legislation -- because it does not know the facts.

"I have been told that it needs time to conduct a study -- or form a Commission to analyze and recommend.

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"I have heard that the Federal pay structure is highly complicated -- that changes need to be made to simplify it -- all of these arguments have been made many times during the past.

"I believe there are some agencies of the Government charged with the responsibility of reviewing these matters -- I think they have had sufficient funds for several years now to be able to keep abreast of changing times.

"I -- as Chairman -- will tolerate no longer the excuse that we do not know -- that we need to study -- that we should form a Commission to find out.

"The staff of the Committee has completed its studies -- it will be ready to make recommendations at the conclusion of these hearings. I hope the witnesses here this morning are ready to recommend needed or justified changes.

"Either Federal employees need and deserve a pay increase --- or they do not.

"If we are agreed that some pay adjustments are necessary and justified --- but that we can't afford it -- then -- you say so.

"Personally --- when I am convinced pay adjustments are warranted and justified -- I'm going to vote for them -- regardless of other considerations.

"I hope with these few remarks we can look at this matter realistically. I sincerely hope this will not become a partisan matter. We are concerned here with human beings -- with their future welfare -- and with the effectiveness and efficiency of the greatest Government in the world."